

Hello,

My name is Linda Versage. I currently live in Bellingham, WA and am submitting scoping comments for the proposed GPT and the resulting coal trains and shipping traffic. I have grave concerns about this project for many reasons. I believe it will significantly and negatively impact the quality of life in our region.

**1. I would like the impact to emergency medical and other safety vehicles scoped when it's estimated that 18 "additional" trains/day will be rolling through our communities.**

I believe that this will have a significant impact on lives that need emergency treatment and services when every single minute counts.

I was recently visiting a property in Skagit County that my husband and I were interested in purchasing. It is adjacent to the train tracks. When we were about to leave the property, a train came by. We could not leave the property! There was no other way out. We had to wait 3-4 minutes for the train to go by. Multiply this times 18 trains/day PLUS the already existing normal train traffic. For 18 trains, that is 54-72 minutes/day that emergency vehicles could not get in, nor could a resident of that particular property get out. Very similar situations would occur all over Whatcom and Skagit counties. Not only is it an inconvenience for those of us that live in the communities with the trains, it will impact lives when emergency vehicles need efficient passage. Imagine the impacts if there is a house or business fire or if someone is suffering a heart attack or stroke.

In our communities in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, will stopping the efficient flow of emergency vehicles compromise human safety?

**I request that the lead agency study the impact on the delay of emergency vehicles, caused by the coal trains, and the impact this will have on human lives and safety.**

If the GPT is built, I request 100% mitigation for this issue in whatever shape that may take for the entire length of tracks (such as building bridges for vehicles or tunnels for the trains).

**2. I would like studied the impact that 18 additional trains will have on the already frequent mud slides along the Washington route from Bellingham to Vancouver, WA.** How might the vibrations from additional trains cause even more frequent mudslides on steep slopes in our wet and rainy region? Will it cause further mudslides and, if so, how will more mudslides affect commerce by other trains and passenger trains?

If the addition of 18 trains/day causes further mudslides, I anticipate negative impacts. This past fall/winter, there were a great deal of mudslides and trains were

unable to make passage. Our 21-year-old daughter was trying to get between Seattle and Bellingham in November and she was unable to take the Amtrak train due to mudslides. Trains carrying freight have first priority so Amtrak gets bumped. I for one would like to see our nation move towards using MORE public transportation, such as trains, not less! In addition, if the coal trains are causing additional mudslides, what about moving of other “non-coal” freight. Businesses in the northwest and elsewhere will be impacted by the delays.

**I request that the lead agency study the impact on the potential increase in mudslides between Bellingham, WA and Vancouver, WA, caused by the coal trains, and the impact this will have on passenger trains and the movement of non-coal freight.**

If the GPT is built, I request 100% mitigation for this issue in whatever shape that may take for the entire length of tracks between Bellingham, WA and Vancouver, WA.

**3. I would like studied the impacts the carrier ships in the Salish Sea, both loaded with coal, and empty loads, will have on our resident Orca Whales, transient whales, salmon and other marine life.**

Whales, salmon and marine life are part of the culture of the Pacific Northwest. Their health, and the quality of the water are part of the livelihood of our region. In addition, they are living and breathing cultural symbols of our people. Our region’s economic health (from Native Americans’ fishing rights, to fisherman, to whale watch boats, to the tourist industry and more) relies on maintaining a healthy marine ecosystem. With the amount of ships carrying coal and returning empty to the GPT to load up again, there is a great risk of pollution to our waters (coal dust and runoff, oil spills, sound pollution and more) and huge impacts to whales, salmon and marine life from all the ship traffic.

**I request that the lead agency scientists study the impact on the potential increase in marine water pollution and the impacts caused by the coal shipping traffic on the Puget Sound resident Orca whales, transient whales, salmon and other marine life.**

I do not see a way to mitigate all these potential impacts. I want 100% mitigation! There should be NO impacts to our marine waters. None! Puget Sound and the Salish Sea have already had enough impacts and they are in grave danger.

Thank you for accepting these Scoping Comments for the GPT.

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